The Sun.

WILLIAM M. LAFFAN.

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The Baltimore Calamity.

The terrible conflagration at Baltimore ranks with the great fires at Chicago in October, 1871, and Boston, in November, 1872, in the extent of the destruction caused by it.

The rapid, mushroomlike growth of the huge Western town, with its highly inflammable construction, made such a conflagration not astonishing but almost inevitable. New York itself in its earlier and rough-and-tumble days was the frequent victim of such fires, invited by wooden constructions and the comparative inefficiency of safeguards against fire in the way of fire department organization and building regulation. But when a conflagration spread over even Boston itself, peculiar among American cities for the solidity of its constructions and for the conservative nature of its municipal methods, there came to the whole Union a shock of surprise, even of consternation. Now, when again, more than a quarter of a century later, another American city of the first class, likewise notable for the substantial character of its development in all respects, has been swept in its district of solidest construction by one of the greatest conflagrations in the history of civilization, the peril from widespread fire in even the most conservatively built and governed of great communities is made still more painfully apparent. This peril, too, seems now to be the greater because of the new complications introduced by the general use of electricity.

The precise extent of the damage done to Baltimore is not yet computable; but, happily, we know that vast as was the loss in the more strictly business parts of the town, the beautiful districts of residences were left unharmed. Moreover, the loss was almost wholly material only. Few casualties to life are reported or are likely to appear when the full consequences of the disaster are summed up. The damage done to property has been great, but to life little.

Baltimore is one of the most delightful of American cities. There is about it a mellowness of social cultivation which is peculiarly attractive. It suggests in its ripeness the social tone of Boston; but there is in Baltimore a Southern flavor which the Puritan town has not. Like New York, Baltimore has grown up without the social advantages which go to a capital, and like New York also, it is very distinctively a commercial and manufacturing town—a Liverpool rather than a London. But Baltimore has always been more securely anchored socially than New York. It has been and is still a community of strong conservatism, with venerated traditions, and its social structure is one of the most substantial in America. The very houses in the region which contains its more important residences bear palpable witness to that spirit of conservatism and the solid substance of its social structure.

England and the War.

While all civilized peoples will regard with intense interest the war in the Far East that now seems unavoidable, there are special reasons why every phase of the struggle should be watched in Great Britain with anxiety and misgiving.

If, by chance, the Russians should win so overwhelming a victory in the first naval battle as to exclude thereafter the Mikado's subjects from the sea, a Japanese invasion of the Asiatic mainland would be impossible, and the contest would be practically over, unless the Czar's advisers should decide to discipline the Island Empire by landing an army on its shores. In that event Great Britain would not be constrained by treaty to interpose, for she has merely promised to assist Japan in case the latter country should be assailed by more than one great Power. Inasmuch, however, as she recognizes that Japan has been the champion of their common interests in the Far East she would doubtless feel herself morally bound to shield the Tokio Government from paying too severe a penalty for its ill fortune. Public opinion in Great Britain would probably demand that the Foreign Office should convey to St. Petersburg an intimation that the Czar should content himself with excluding the Japanese from Corea and refrain from invading their native soil.

We may take for granted that such an intimation would be heeded, as both France and Germany desire to avert the worldwide complications that would follow the entrance of England into the war. The worst, therefore, that could happen to Japan, should she suffer a conclusive reverse in the first sea fight, would be the virtual extinction of her hope to figure as a naval Power and to acquire an outlet for her manufactures and her surplus population in the Corean peninsula.

Let us assume, on the other hand, that the event will justify the computation of certain naval experts that Japan's superiority to Russia in Far Eastern waters is as 19 to 14. Should the Russian fleet be so seriously crippled in the first naval engagement as thereafter to be excluded permanently from the sea Russia would labor under the grave disabilities attendant upon the prosecution of a contest on land at a vast distance from her base. Should the Trans-Siberian Railway break down or be cut in many places—and one of these things is almost certain to happen—the day might soon arrive when Russia would have to put her pride in her pocket and earnestly solicit the aid of a maritime Power in order that the needed supplies might be forwarded by sea.

There is reason to think that only with reluctance would M. DELCASSÉ respond to such an appeal; but a vehement outburst of sympathy on the part of the French people might constrain the Combes Ministry to make common cause with their ally. That is an outcome of the situation that England has cause to dread, for it would then become her duty, under her treaty with Japan, to throw her own sword into the scale. A war with France would tax her naval resources to the utmost, for, besides protecting her innumerable transmarine possessions, she would have to insure the regular movement of her food supply from the United States and Canada.

Nor is this the only complication to which a decisive naval victory on the part of Japan might give rise. It is conceivable, if not probable, that Germany as well as France might go to Russia's assistance, holding that the three Powers to-day are even more closely united by a community of interests in the Far East than they were in 1895, when they jointly interposed to deprive Japan of the Liao-Tung peninsula. It is obvious, indeed, that should Japan drive the Russians out of Manchuria Germany might as well abandon the hope of transforming the small settlement at Kiao-Chou into a virtual protectorate over the great Province of Shantung. Should the Berlin Government recognize, however, that its most valuable nucleus of colonial empire was at stake and decide to throw in its lot with France and Russia the difficulties and the dangers with which England would be confronted would be, of course, immensely magnified.

Under the circumstances we are not surprised at the feverish tone observable in many British newspapers that reflect faithfully public opinion. Next to the combatants themselves, no Power on earth is so vitally concerned in the issue of the first naval battle as is Great Britain. Not since the early years of the last century, when the eyes of Englishmen were strained southward to Cape St. Vincent and to Trafalgar, has a sea fight been fraught for them with such momentous possibilities.

The Immediate Nuisance of the West Indies.

The American Government has established precedents for the exercise of police power in the West Indies and has indorsed a broad principle which was enunciated by President MCKINLEY when he said in his historic message of April 11, 1898:

"In the name of humanity, in the name of civilization, in behalf of endangered American interests, which give us the right and the duty to speak and to act, the war in Cuba must stop."

Before the United States had any place on the map of the world, Santo Domingo was a little hotbed of rows and wrangling, internal insurrections and almost persistent disturbances, besides being a bone of contention over which France and Spain had more than once quarrelled and fought. The history of Santo Domingo for the entire period of the Nineteenth century is a record of strife punctuated with brief intervals which served as little else than mere breathing spaces for enabling the combatants to resume their disturbance. A land within a few miles of our border has been for a hundred years the scene of almost persistent revolt, insurrection, war with its neighbors, assassination and the destruction of property.

Revolution appears to have become a fixed habit with the Dominicans, and the habit grows stronger as the years go by. A weak ruler is overthrown by a stronger rival. An iron-handed ruler, like HEUREAUX, is assassinated. Anarchy has become an established custom, and a land upon which nature has lavished her bounty in endless measure, a land in which affluence should be the reward of peaceful toil, is given over to battle, murder and industrial distress, a misery to itself and a nuisance to its neighbors.

If Santo Domingo does not at an early day manifest a clear purpose and a due ability to settle down and "adopt the manners and customs of civilization" it may come within the class of nuisances contemplated by President MCKINLEY in his memorable declaration of nearly six years ago.

Sammy Chandler's Sha.

The *Harvard Graduates' Magazine* publishes parts of the diary kept by SAMUEL, more familiarly known as "SAMMY," CHANDLER, a Gloucester boy who was graduated at Harvard in the class of 1775. Some lively events were taking place in Massachusetts when SAMMY was in college; and his diary is a curious picture of forgotten or faded manners. He was a liberal and unreformed speller. Was it as hard for our wise and pious ancestors to spell in their chartered libertine fashion as it is for their descendants to keep in the paths of rule? And was there any limit to their debauch of capital letters?

"At about 5 of Clok," SAMMY took "Schoher" from Gloucester to Boston, Feb. 10, 1773. Four hours to Boston. As moderns would say, somebody "touched" SAMMY "for five" or else he lost that amount. He seems to have been a young gentleman of strong sociological tastes; and even in those days sociology came high. SAMMY was not the boy to put down that $5 on the profit and loss account and say nothing. The Witch of Endor was a more real personage to him than she is to this generation. There was a wizard, DUSTS the Conjuror, in Dedham. So Feb. 25, SAMMY hired "Mr. STEETMAN'S hors and Sha" and drove to Dedham with his classmates EMERSON, HALL and "BATTLE" (BATTELLE; SAMMY likes to be phonetic). He told DUSTS he "had lost something and wanted his Helpe in discovering ye Person." DUSTS,

"upon no other Information told me when I had lost it, how I left my Money and that I suspected one particular Person. he described PARKER so exactly that before he had mentioned one Quarter of ye Description two of my company (who knew nothing of the Affair) knew it by ye Description of him and mentioned his name:"

DUSTS saw the money "on the East side of a Chimney which is a place where PARKER'S Chest stands" and described the house. SAMMY got back to Cambridge in time to drink tea at ye Punch Bowl, but he didn't get back the five dollars. DUSTS assured him that "the Money has some Part been Spent, but the Remainder is hid near ye College House Pump." SAMMY looked for it there, but in vain.

SAMMY seems to have resolved to be a conjuror himself. In March he went with TYLER and the Hors and Sha to DUSTS to have their fortunes told. "I talked to him about larnin the Art. he gave me great Encouradgment." Back to the Punch Bowl at 8; home at 11. SAMMY says he drank coffee.

SAMMY ran with the machine, the college fire engine, a noble instrument of protection and devastation, which, in somewhat later days, at least, was a great stimulator of thirst; the wicked said of fire. The college engine got to the "Gail" fire before the village engine. We don't know when SAMMY studied. This same day of the victory at the "Gail" he is in Boston, at the wharves, looking at a royal storeship burn. "The Inhabitants see her burn with Pleasure, only they are sorry the Commissioners are not on Bord."

SAMMY "cut" recitations and lectures with considerable regularity. He was sorry he didn't go to Mr. WINTHROP'S lecture, still there were compensations. "Saw a man set in the Pillery for Forgery." When there is "something doing" in Boston, SAMMY is there. The "Mob concerning Tea" attracts him. He is at "ye Meeting of ye Inhabitants" and finds them "fully resolved yt ye tea shall be sent back." Dec. 15, he records that "the Vessels were borded and ye Tea hove overbord—huzzar!" A better patriot than speller.

SAMMY'S livery bills must have been long. He is always hiring the Sha and going into Boston to watch British regiments and transports and entrenchments. Finally he determines to be a soldier himself and enrolls himself in the Cambridge company to "larn the exercises." It is an amusing reflection of the revolutionary spirit that the undergraduates revolted against the "tiranicle Authority" of certain tutors. Discipline was relaxed and SAMMY seems to have done pretty much as he pleased. Two students who from bravado or a love of paradox tried to speak a pro-British dialogue were hissed down.

SAMMY CHANDLER served in the Revolutionary Army. Perhaps the service was not much rougher than bumping over muddy roads in the Sha. He died in 1786. We leave him with a good, old, New England pronunciation in his mouth: the British soldiers "were a going to Watertown to git the Cannon."

A Neglected Method of Fire Protection.

Every community that has a water front should have a system of fire mains tapping the ocean, the lake or the river on which it lies. An inexhaustible supply of water would thus be at the command of the fire departments.

The Borough of Manhattan, a narrow island, is so situated that the neglect of the city to utilize for its protection the limitless reservoirs surrounding it is little short of criminal. Fire Chief KRUGER declares that a conflagration once started among the old and inflammable structures on the lower West Side might sweep the financial quarter before it could be overcome; and at every great fire there is difficulty in getting sufficient water to supply all the apparatus.

In Baltimore a number of engines were useless because they could not pump salt water. No city is immune to fire, and in New York this obvious and valuable protection offered by the rivers should be developed to its fullest possibilities.

Postage Stamp Reform.

There are 74,169 postmasters in the United States, and to every one of them a bill introduced in the House of Representatives by the Hon. EZEKIEL SAMUEL CANDLER, Jr., of Corinth, Miss., is of the deepest personal interest. Mr. CANDLER would have the burden of licking postage stamps removed from the lips of the letter writers and put into the mouths of the postmasters. He proposes that whenever the necessary amount of money to pay the postage on a letter is deposited in a lawful mailing place with the letter it shall be the duty of the postmaster receiving it to affix the stamps to the envelope and credit the cash to the United States Government.

When such a law is passed no one will stamp his letters. Every citizen detests that incident of correspondence by mail, and has it done by a substitute whenever he can. In fact, some sociologists contend that the decay of the art of letter writing dates from the adoption of the adhesive postage stamp. Perhaps, if the postmasters were required to lick the stamps, letter writing might regain its former high estate as a polite and elegant accomplishment.

But what of the postmasters? Think of the millions of stamps they would have to affix to envelopes. Mr. CANDLER'S bill does not provide for the delegation of the stamp licking function to subordinates in the Department. The postmasters themselves must do the licking. Would they prove equal to the task? Would any scale of remuneration induce them to remain in office, to wear out their tongues in their country's service?

The State Barber Examining Commission is out of funds. Unless the Legislature can be induced to impose an annual tax on each shaver and hair cutter this governmental annex will have to go out of business. Never has a Commonwealth engaged in a more picayunish enterprise. The best thing for the Legislature to do is to repeal the law creating the commission, and the next best thing is to let it starve to death.

The Hon. FREDERICK HUNTINGTON GILLETT of Massachusetts has introduced in the House a bill providing that Representatives and Senators shall receive $2,500 a year in addition to their present salaries, but shall forfeit the allowances now made for clerk hire, mileage, stationery and office rent. His bill would also repeal the law under which a commission is now preparing to construct an office building for the Members of Congress.

We shall be interested in watching the statesmen from the Pacific Coast and other remote districts as they press eagerly forward to vote to give up mileage.

The German official returns of the imports of grain from Russia for the past three years show a steady increase for each succeeding year. The bulk in metric tons, which amounted to 1,696,919 tons in 1901, rose to 1,914,266 tons in 1902, and to 2,377,725 tons in 1903. The difference between the quantities of each kind of grain imported for the last two years was as follows, in tons:

	1903.	1902.
Wheat	560,120	499,862
Rye	613,850	650,706
Barley	854,730	521,116
Oats	349,025	242,582
Totals	2,377,725	1,914,266

The proportion of the Russian grain to the total grain imports of Germany in 1903 were 37 per cent. of the wheat, 89 per cent. of the rye, 71 per cent. of the barley and 88 per cent. of the oats. Other Russian agricultural products are also finding their way in increasing quantities into the German market.

On the other hand, German machinery and metal manufactures of all kinds are penetrating to the furthest confines of Russian Asia, the sewing machines displacing those of English and American make, while this country still holds the field for mowers and reapers.

THE COAL OF THE WORLD.

Present Production and Consumption and Future Development.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The total annual production of the coal of the world is, according to official statistics, over 700,000,000 tons, exclusive of lignite. This was produced almost entirely by five countries, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Belgium, in the following proportions for the years 1900-1902. Tons are quoted:

	1900.	1901.	1902.
United States	240,788,000	261,874,000	269,195,000
United Kingdom	225,181,000	219,047,000	227,095,000
Germany	149,551,000	153,019,000	150,600,000
France	32,722,000	31,634,000	29,574,000
Belgium	23,463,000	22,213,000	22,760,000

The first two are in long tons of 2,240 pounds each, the others in metric tons of 2,204 pounds each.

A glance at the figures tells us that the United States and the United Kingdom together produce between two-thirds and three-fourths of the world's coal output, with the United States leading. Its lead began in 1899 and has continued unbroken. Germany's production is practically stationary. The productions of France and Belgium are declining. The figures for Germany include brown coal, or lignite, as that forms one-third of Germany's coal production.

The leading per capita productions are:

United Kingdom	5½ tons
United States	3½ tons
Belgium	3 1-3 tons

In money the three years productions quoted represented, in round millions of dollars:

	1900.	1901.	1902.
United States	$319,000,000	$368,000,000	$372,000,000
United Kingdom	608,000,000	512,000,000	467,000,000
Germany	241,000,000	253,000,000	262,000,000
France	98,000,000	99,000,000	92,000,000
Belgium	70,000,000	66,000,000	68,000,000

The average number of miners employed and the tonnage production per miner for the five countries named were as follows:

	Year.	Miners.	Tons per Miner.
United States	1902	518,207	520
United Kingdom	1902	805,100	278
Germany	1901	448,000	242
France	1901	159,957	198
Belgium	1901	134,092	166

Here we see the productive capacity of the American miner to be far superior to those of other countries. Our improved coal-cutting machinery and the fact that the mines we work are nearer the surface, partly account for this superiority, but only partly. The fact remains that in coal mining, as in other trades, the foreign laborer works to live, while the American workman lives to work, bar his "striking propensities," provocation or no real provocation. Foreign workmen in the United States too soon become Americanized in this respect for their own good.

All the countries named except France export more coal than they import. The figures for 1902 are, in tons:

	Exports.	Imports.
United Kingdom	60,400,000	3,000
Germany	18,981,000	14,752,000
Belgium	6,574,000	3,496,000
United States	6,127,000	2,544,000
France	1,016,000	13,641,000

This shows the United States fourth in the list of coal exporting countries and it occupies the same place in the importing list. Of the 60,000,000 tons exported by the United Kingdom, 15,148,000 tons, or one-fourth, was for the use of steamers engaged in foreign trade. France also exports for the same purpose, but neither the United States nor Germany.

The following figures of the home consumption of the five countries in 1901 and 1902 show, in tons, the immensely superior value of our home market:

	1901.	1902.
United States	256,407,000	265,612,000
United Kingdom	161,271,000	166,698,000
Germany	142,250,000	146,370,000
France	44,657,000	42,199,000
Belgium	18,951,000	19,691,000

The United States largely exceeds in home consumption, but ranks second in per capita consumption—3.38 tons, as compared with the United Kingdom's 3.97. This is accounted for by the fact that we use wood and oil largely in the operation of steam power and steam traction.

Canada uses far more coal than is produced in the Dominion, but the undeveloped coal fields of Nova Scotia are estimated to contain 7,000,000,000 tons, and a good grade of anthracite in large quantities is found in her North West Territories. Moreover, the Canadian coal production is increasing, having been 7,639,000 tons in 1903 against 5,560,000 tons in 1902, an increase of 2,079,000 tons, or more than one-third. Of the other British Colonies and possessions, New South Wales, Natal, British India and New Zealand export more coal than they import, while Victoria, South and West Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and Cape Colony do the reverse.

Japan's export of coal was nearly 3,000,000 tons more than her imports. She also has coal fields to develop which will yield 1,000,000,000 tons. Russia, Sweden, Spain, Italy and Austria-Hungary all import much more coal than they export. Including lignites, Austria-Hungary leads in this respect. Germany and Austria-Hungary lead all other countries in producing lignite. According to the statistics of our Geological Survey, the United States produced 4,314,000 tons of lignite in 1902, of which four-fifths was produced in the States of Colorado and Wyoming.

Pennsylvania leads in the production of American anthracite. Of the 41,000,000 tons mined in 1902 practically all came from Pennsylvania, Colorado and New Mexico together producing only 95,000 tons. The same State leads in bituminous coal, her share being 40 per cent. of the 1902 production. The other soft coal producing States were, in the order named, Illinois, Ohio, West Virginia and Alabama.

Chisholm's "Handbook of Commercial Geography," estimating the areas of the coal fields of the world, places China first, with 200,000 square miles. This is a rough and probably a very low estimate; but as the Celestial Empire leads the world in present known coal areas, we can see what a loss it will mean to the world if Russia is permitted to absorb Manchuria, actually or commercially. In resisting Russian aggression Japan is really acting for all the coal consuming countries of the world.

In our own case, the estimate of 192,000 square miles is exclusive of Dakota and all the Rocky Mountain States and the Territories, as well as the Pacific Coast, with Alaska and the Philippines yet to be heard from in coal.

This communication is mainly based on a report just issued by the consular reports section of the Bureau of Statistics of our Department of Commerce and Labor. In collating and publishing information of this timely character this new Department is becoming of increasing value to the business interests of the United States.

WALTER J. BALLARD.

SCHENECTADY, Feb. 8.

Some Advice.

Rule well thy passions and desires:
In short, so play thy part
That in thy tenement of clay
The janitor thou art.

IF JAPAN SHOULD WIN.

Interesting Speculations About the Consequences of a Russian Defeat.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Would it be for the interests of civilization to have Russia beaten in a contest with Japan or even to receive a serious setback at the hands of the Asiatic Power?

It might be answered that the question assumes an impossibility—that a great European Power, with almost exhaustless military resources in the way of material for an army, should be overcome by an Oriental island kingdom only recently advanced to a place of serious consideration among the Powers of the world. Simply because Russia could not afford to succumb to such an enemy without an irreparable loss of prestige, her defeat in the long run at the hands of Japan is set down as a contingency beyond the range of practical possibility.

It is not improbable, nay, it even may be said to be probable, that in the naval contests with which the war would begin and by which alone it might be decided sharply Japan would have an advantage so great as almost to imply her victory in them. English naval opinion is that in the purely naval war by which the contest will be initiated, if not decided, the Japanese fleet will be victorious. Nor is that impression unshared by our own navy officers and by officers of all European navies. The Japanese navy is of the latest and best construction, it is large and powerful and well officered and manned. In the Asiatic waters in which the conflict would take place the Japanese have a great preponderance in ships and guns.

If, then, in the early naval engagements of the war Japan should succeed in destroying the Russian fleet, what would be the results?

Such a victory would be the most momentous in the history of the navies of this period, or since the new evolution of naval construction. It would afford the first supreme test of the most modern types of naval machines. It would also inflict on Russia a disaster so terrible that the war would necessarily be brought to a speedy conclusion in the humiliation of that Power On land, doubtless, Russia might keep up a contest which would eventually wear out Japan, for it would be substantially in the position of a Power invaded and holding possession of interior lines, and as to the ultimate issue of such a contest there could hardly be a doubt. But, with its fleet destroyed, Russia would practically have lost the war, and its land demonstrations would be relatively of insignificance. Actually, its hold on Manchuria would be gone.

A Japanese naval victory, too, would give a new stimulus to the self-confidence of Japan, whose rapid rise in the scale of civilization has already kindled that spirit to a degree somewhat ominous, even to Western nations of longest civilized development, and it may easily be inflamed into arrogant self-assertion. Japan is like a boy just out of college. The Japanese think they know it all. Their self-confidence, demonstrated somewhat superlatively in their readiness, even eagerness, to measure conclusions with the greatest of the European Powers in extent of population, might become a mania if with their new fleet they should be able utterly to destroy the fleet of a gigantic European Power; and it is conceivable that that sense of self-importance might drive these conquering Orientals to dangerous extremes. Russian prestige would be broken by naval defeat at the hands of an Asiatic Power upon which only a few years before she had looked with contemptuous condescension.

Of course, it is yet to be demonstrated that Russia could not cope with Japan on the sea. If the fleets of the two come into a decisive conflict the outcome is not predicable from any experience of naval warfare since the new development, except that the naval fights in the Chinese war and in our war with Spain seem to indicate that the advantage is certainly with the Power of preponderant naval strength if it is not inferior in tactical ability and the capacity for fighting its ships. Now, naval opinion generally seems to agree that so far as concerns engineering and seamanlike ability Russia has no superiority over Japan, even if it is not distinctly overbalanced by the Japanese Navy. The impression seems to prevail that in alertness in manipulation the marvellously dexterous Japanese may prove themselves to be superior, at least for a short pull, or in a naval contest of quick decision, such as it is assumed that between Japan and Russia in the Asiatic waters would be. The Japanese would go into the fight absolutely confident, and with no fear of their enemy. They understand the vital necessity to them of striking a crushing blow at the very outset of the war, and they would be ready to take great risks, the more because of their preponderance of naval strength in the contested waters. This is so obvious that British naval opinion seems to assume that the outcome will be the speedy destruction of the Russian fleet and therefore an early conclusion of the war.

Now, is it desirable for civilization that Japan in its first encounter with a first-class European State should receive the tremendous stimulus to its self-importance which such a victory over Russia would give to it? A readjustment of the balance of power of momentous consequence to the world might be involved. It would mean the unquestioned dominance of Japan in the East and an Oriental development of which there has been no precedent in modern times. Of course, so long as Japan remains an insular Power purely, its possibilities are restricted to an extent which prevents its growth in the utilization and application of the arts of civilization from becoming a serious menace, but if it extends itself to the Asiatic continent and gains the mastery in Corea and China, that menace might become seriously disturbing to civilization; for, undoubtedly, victory over Russia would give it an Oriental leadership to which China would render homage. If, then, under Japanese influence, tuition, and eventual domination, the vast military resources potential in China should be organized and concentrated, the gravest results might follow. For the first time in modern history an Asiatic Power of enormous strength would be developed, with a civilization of its own in which were imitated and utilized the ideas and the material achievement of Occidental civilization.

No one can come in contact with intelligent Japanese without discerning that the ambition for such a development of their power has possession of their minds. They have studied and adopted our Western methods, but they are not appalled by our civilization. At bottom they have in their self-confidence a sense of superiority to it. Having learned its practical lessons, as they think they have done already in full measure, they feel able to strengthen themselves against it so irresistibly that they can pursue their dream of Oriental domination without fear of obstruction. They want to hold the East against the West, and if they should succeed in their first great contest with a capital European Power, it is not inconceivable, it is almost inevitable, that their self-importance would rise to arrogant assumption that they were the foremost Power in the world; and in that feeling they would have Chinese sympathy.

This war, therefore, of so momentous consequence to Japan, may be not less momentous for the world of civilization also.

NEW YORK, Feb. 8. AN AMERICAN.

The Importance to the Czar of the Support of the Orthodox Church.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The rupture of diplomatic relations between Russia and Japan, owing to the dilatoriness of the former and the impatience of the latter, is not necessarily a precursor of immediate war. It may even possibly lead to a clearing up of the situation by bringing the negotiations which now will be carried on, if they are continued, through intermediaries, down to what may be termed a business basis.

Putting aside as mere diplomatic formula the solicitude for the independence of Corea expressed by both sides in what has become a somewhat wearisome dispute, what the world wants to know is just what each of the parties is really aiming at, and whether the pretensions of either justify their breaking the peace of the world in pursuance of them. That is the question really at issue.

The influence of Russia on the side of Europe, which was always strong before she spread herself across the Asiatic Continent, and before any Asiatic Power had arisen to dispute her advance, has been sensibly weakened in Europe. Evidence of this is to be seen in the concessions that have been made to Austria, and incidentally to Germany, in connection with the question of the Balkans; and in the consideration shown to the Sultan and his misrule in Turkey.

In order, therefore, to be able to exert her full power at either extremity, Russia is now called on to decide whether she is to continue to exercise a partial ascendency on the west, or to renounce that for an absolute predominance in central and northern Asia to the Pacific. Under present conditions she cannot hold both positions, but must give up something, and that substantial, at one extremity.

Which it is to be must be a source of deep anxiety to the Czar personally and to his advisers, individually and collectively. His reported intended visit to Moscow is no doubt connected with the crisis, national in the full sense, in which Russia now finds herself. If it is a situation so grave that what in its notice to the Bulgarian Government last year the Russian Foreign Office called "the heritage of the Russian people" is really in danger, the supreme moment may have come when the Czar will be moved to appeal not only to the patriotism of the Russian people, but to that of the Russian Church

Alongside of the wealth of that great national institution, the few hundreds of millions of dollars in gold in the Bank of Russia and the Government treasury are but as a drop in a bucket of water. With the funds at its disposal the Orthodox Church of Russia could sustain the Government through a prolonged conflict; and in such a crisis as may occur if Japan at the instigation of one or more Powers begins war, the Russian Government and Church will be one, the more so because Japan is not a Christian nation.

As regards the actual situation, it would seem that Russia will not make a Japanese occupation of the southern part of Corea a *casus belli* and there would therefore be no immediate clash The first would come when the Japanese forces on sea or land advanced beyond the line Russia had laid down as the limit. The season as yet, however, is against operations in Manchuria and northern Corea on an extensive scale. F.

NEW YORK, Feb. 8

THE NEAR SIDE ORDINANCE.

Does It Vitiate the Damage Claim of a Victim of a Street Accident?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Why does not the Board of Aldermen repeal the "near crossing" ordinance? Is it not because the street railway companies want the rule? In other cities the crossings at street corners are intended not only as a convenience but also as a safety to pedestrians against being run down by passing vehicles, it being a strong factor in a damage suit if the pedestrian was on the crosswalk at the time. If he was in the roadway the inference is that he was taking his chances. If that holds in New York one must not only be subject to inconveniences inside the cars but also, after being landed in slush, will find himself twenty yards from the crossing (a vantage point of convenience and safety provided for those purposes by the city, and compelled to avoid the passing vehicles as best he can without right of way.

The ordinance should be repealed at once.

NEW YORK, Feb. 8. J. C. G.

DOCTORS IN COMMAND.

What Will Happen if Dr. Ainsworth's Plan Is Adopted.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* In commenting on the remarks of Congressman Palmer concerning the reduction of the Medical Department you made the statement that the Medical Department of the army had been converted into a training school for Major-Generals of the army.

I am inclined to think that your statement was made in jest and without realizing how much truth there was in it. Immediately after it appeared a report was published that a board of officers convened by the War Department, of which Dr. Ainsworth was president, had presented a report recommending that the office of Adjutant-General be abolished and that a new office of Military Secretary be created which should combine the duties of Adjutant-General and the Records Office and that Dr. Ainsworth be put in charge.

This change was recommended by two out of the three members of the board. Dr. Ainsworth was, of course, one of these recommending his own promotion, and the other was Gen. Bliss. Both of these officers have been engaged for years in civil duties. Neither of them commanded troops in the field; yet these mere theorists in the military profession, in spite of the protests of the only practical soldier who was a member of the board, propose to do away with a department of the army which has existed since the beginning and is considered by military officers of experience as an essential part of an army.

If the recommendation of these two semi-military men is enacted into a law, and when Dr. Wood is confirmed as a Major-General, we will in a few years have a most remarkable situation in our army. Dr. Wood will be Lieutenant-General and Chief of Staff; Dr. Ainsworth will be Major-General and—some other doctor Military Secretary, with the duties of Adjutant-General. Gen. Bliss is Chief of the War College.

This state of affairs is not merely a hypothetical situation, but is what will actually happen if the proposed bill becomes a law. Most of this situation will be realized, no matter what effort is taken to prevent it.

Just think of it! The entire internal control of the army, the planning of our future military policies and the higher education of our officers placed in the hands of two doctors and an expert Collector of Customs and commissary, all of whom are lacking in the first principles of a practical soldier.

In view of the experience the army is now undergoing would it not be well to assign a doctor as commandant of the Military Academy and change the military course of instruction to that of a medical school, to be presided over by doctors?

Will not some Senator take the part of the officers who do the work in the field and are absent from Washington?

Should military command be bestowed on non-combatant staff officers, or on those who have a proved capacity for command?

If it is necessary to select young officers for Generals, as is the specious plea of the Administration, there are many young officers who have shown by actual field work their capacity to command. Yet not one of the four so-called young general officers appointed the past year has had any experience whatever as a commander of troops in the field. THOMAS H GEIGER.

NEW YORK, Feb. 7

The Stratification of New York Sidewalks.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The sidewalks of New York city on a sleety morning present a fine example of conglomeration. Beginning with a groundwork of ice we discover above that such substances as salt, dust, earth, sawdust, shavings, ashes, cinders, corn meal and several unknown detergents to slip-ups. Of course these are not found in successive layers, but are distributed one layer thick along the fronts of houses from the slums to the seventh heaven, and their appearance is reminiscent of a country town in the Wayback Deestrick. Is there any law against New Yorkers having small or large boxes of sand put away in safe places to be used on the sidewalks as a neutralizer of sleet? It is sure and safe, and is clean and decent looking. I fancy a quarter's worth would last all winter—even such a winter as this. If the people do not know where they can get clean sand, is there no huckster in this town with enterprise enough to go around in October with a wagon load selling it out in dribs to suit? He ought to be able to buy a ton for a dollar or two and sell it for twenty. Isn't that enough? C. J.

THE PLAZA, Feb. 6.

The Antique Envelope.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* If this is an age of progress why don't the manufacturers of stationery take a tumble to the bungling methods of ancient envelope making and give us something modern? A few make spasmodic efforts in that direction, but the prevailing style is as it was fifty years ago—and there ought to be something different all along the line. M.

BROOKLYN, Feb. 7.

A Pitiful Case.

From The New Orleans Times-Democrat.

["There are no oaths or expletives in the Japanese language. The nearest approach to one is to call a man a 'beast'."]

We who are reared in a Christian country,
With plenty of oaths for the humblest man,
Friends, have you ever paused to consider
The pitiful case of Japan?

They tread on a tack and perforce are silent;
They fall in a ditch and there's naught to say;
A waiter spills soup on their Sunday garments,
And a barber, instead of "bay,"

Fixes them up with a loud hair tonic,
While they are glancing the paper o'er;
A button bursts at a critical moment,
Their favorite team don't score—

And their wrath through it all must still be bottled,
No vent of language to give them ease;
I could weep for years with the sadness of it,
Unfortunate Japanese!

MR. WARNER REBUKES BRYAN.

The Veteran Bimetallist on the Financial Plank in the Kansas City Platform.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* As long as the world's money systems are founded on gold or silver, or on both, the question of production is of primary importance, for on this depends the stability of the standard and the permanency of price levels. When, therefore, the annual supply of basic money was cut down from something over $200,000,000 of gold and silver to scarcely more than $100,000,000 of gold alone, the standard itself was changed; price levels gradually fell 50 per cent., business was made unsafe, and the equities of existing contracts were overturned. Bimetallists earnestly protested against this action, both on moral and economic grounds, and they then were right.

But it by no means follows, because it was both wrong and an economic blunder, under conditions that existed then, to demonetize silver in this country in 1873, and thereby increase the value of money before specie resumption had been entered upon or any part of our great war debt paid—it by no means follows that to restore silver to free coinage at the old ratio of 16 to 1 was the right thing to do in 1900 or that it would be the right thing to do in 1904.

In the first place, such a step would not right the former wrong, but would result in creating a new set of wrongs, and would again, though in the opposite direction, arbitrarily change price levels and needlessly unsettle the more prosperous conditions which the increased production of gold has led up to. In a nutshell, the difference is this: From 1873 to 1896 the average production of gold for the world had been from $9,000,000 to $10,000,000 a month. This was not enough to maintain a stable average price level, and consequently prices fell and the purchasing power of money rose. Now the production of gold has risen to nearly $30,000,000 a month, with the probability that even this sum may be exceeded, perhaps for years to come. This is enough, not only to prevent falling prices generally, but under existing systems of paper based on coin will almost certainly, in the absence of disturbing causes not foreseen, insure a slowly rising price line while the increased production lasts.

Mr. Bryan seems persistently to ignore these changed conditions, either from stubbornness or from the want of inclination to go to the bottom of questions like these. He ought to know, however, that such pronouncements as he has been making in the face of the consensus of opposite counsels must tend utterly to destroy confidence in him as a leader. He should remember the old adage that "a flaw of an inch in one's thinking may be felt a thousand miles."

The silver question, to bimetallists who thoroughly understood it, was always one of adequate supply of basic money and nothing further. The ratio at which the metals should be used as money—if both are used—was always of secondary importance, and it was unfortunate for the cause of bimetallism and for the Democratic party in 1896 and more unfortunate still in 1900 that the silver question went into the campaign, as it were, tail end first; that is, the ratio to the front.

In its international aspect the silver question still remains an important one; nor can it be settled on the plan proposed by the Conant Commission. To get silver using nations, like Mexico and China, to adopt gold as their standard in international trade, while retaining silver under free coinage at home, will not, as some think, secure a "permanent par of exchange" between the two metals. The tendency will be exactly the reverse, as such a course would increase the use of gold and lessen the use of silver, and make the maintenance of the gold standard more difficult in the commercially weaker countries where it has already been set up.

The law by which the two metals can be kept together and a "permanent par of exchange" be secured is a plain one. The use of either metal must be made to increase with the relative increase of its supply so as to preserve at all times the equality of ratios between their production and use. This can be done only by a combination of principal commercial nations all agreeing, at a specified ratio, to accept either metal in international trade.

Of course, the greater or less use of paper money and other forms of credit will affect the value of basic money and determine in no small degree the distribution of gold among gold standard nations, and incidentally affect the stability of any money system. In this country, for instance, we have some $2,500,000,000 of current money, gold, silver and paper. On this is based a structure of credit, known as bank credits, of some $9,500,000,000.

A bill is pending in Congress to interpose between these forms of currency an "asset currency," indefinite in amount, with no element but credit in it. It is evident that such a currency injected between the present volume of actual money and bank credits would introduce such an element of instability as would greatly endanger our whole money system.

While, then, the next Democratic platform should, and doubtless will, notwithstanding Mr. Bryan's declarations to the contrary, recognize the change in the situation as relates to silver, it will also declare for a sound paper money system in opposition to "asset currency" or any other form of currency resting merely on private credit and regulated only by private interests. To such a currency the Democratic party has always been opposed. A. J. WARNER.

MARIETTA, Ohio, Feb. 5.

The Indians and the Sheriff.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Your editorial on "The Sioux and the Sheriff" tells the story of another of those unpleasant episodes which result from bravado on the part of those in authority. The Battle of Wounded Knee, where bucks, squaws and children were slaughtered, was fought to avenge the massacre of the Seventh Cavalry, under Gen. Custer, who was outgeneralled and annihilated by the Sioux in the '70s.

Indians do not go on the warpath with their squaws, children and old men; these are left in the mountain fastnesses. It should be borne in mind that the Indians are getting as scarce as the game, and those who protect the latter should keep their hands as free from the tarnish of murderous outrage as is possible in this age of justice.

YONKERS, Feb. 7. CARL EICKEMEYER.

The Relative Hatching Efficiency of Domestic Fowl.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I note in an agricultural and poultry handbook that a turkey sitting on a hen's egg will hatch it in an average of twenty-four days, and on a duck's egg in twenty-seven days, whereas a hen will hatch a duck egg in thirty days and a hen's egg in twenty-one days. Can some of the experts in these matters throw some light through THE SUN on this peculiar difference? Is it a question of affinity, or magnetism, or what?

BROOKLYN, Feb. 6. IGNORAMUS.

Sango, the Negro Orator.

From The Kansas City Journal.

At the Republican convention held recently at Okmulgee, Sango, the negro politician, delivered this speech: "Mistah Speakah, case why am we heah? Why? Didn't Aristotel sit on the bank of the Ganges four thousand years ago and with his ear attuned to the music of spheres heah the mighty footfalls of dis aggregious aggregation of pie-hunters trying to ride to glory on de back ob de niggah? Isn't I right?"

Room at the Top.

There is always room at the top, young man,
As you'll find if you ever get there;
Keep on till you stop, there is room at the top
Of a bald-headed man for hair.

W. J. L.